/The Sedentary Tibetans/

*563 62 [622] [623] [632] [792] [622] There is more rigidity about the village organization. The sedentary Tibetans generally have a formally selected village headman. But again the council of elders has considerable authority. Groups of villages are organized into a larger unit, nor is it uncommon for villages and encampments to be joined together in such a larger unit. A monastery is more apt to have authority over a group of villages than over the strictly nomadic people. However, like the nomads, the sedentary Tibetans give very little recognition to any authority beyond that of the ecclesiastical or lay chief of the "tribe". Ma Ho-t'ien, in his Diary of Travels in the Border Region of Kansu, Chinghai and Tibet makes frequent reference to the inability of the Chinese officials to exert any sort of authority over the border-Tibetans and other sources also record the absence of any effective government beyond the local level.

[423] The village itself represents a very tightly-knit organization, economically and politically, as well as physically. Houses, housesites and the fields belong to the individual families, but the grazing lands and forests are community property. Use of the pastureland is available to all, but the village may place certain restrictions on the quantities of timber that may be taken for specific purposes.

*563 621 241 [787] [292] Just as the nomads act simultaneously in moving their encampments from one site to another, so the sedentary Tibetans also insist on simultaneous group action within the village. The first day of spring planting, determined by horoscope, sees all the villagers proceeding to their individual fields in their best clothing. The fields are ploughed simultaneously. The seeds are sown at the same time in each field. And, when harvest time comes, all the fields must be completely harvested in the time that it takes the smallest field to be harvested with a small hand sickle. If one's fields are too large one hires extra help. During the course of the growing season all the villagers periodically parade through the fields carrying the holy books on their heads. These communal activities have both religious and economic bases.

[787] [776] [782] From the viewpoint of the religion, if the days have been selected as auspicious, they are auspicious for the community's members as a whole. It is when the spirits of the ground, the demons of hail and misfortune can be allayed or propitiated that determines the best days for performing the needed tasks. From the viewpoint of economics, when the ground has been plowed and the seeds planted, the fields are encircled by a community fence to prevent onslaughts by roaming animals.

[625] [486] [651] A community watchman also stands guard. It also means that the villagers can collect a tax from caravans that pass through their lands. Once the fields have been harvested, the community

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-/Chinese Moslems (Dungans)/

within the railings in the mosque and read the Koran, wear white or green turbans, the leader's turban being more elaborate, with a tassel hanging down the back. Common people wear pointed octagonal caps of white, red or black, the color distinguishing the sect to which they belong.

Some women dress differently from the Chinese women, and wear a sort of turban hat. Ordinarily their dresses are in dark colors, but they may wear gay colors for festivals. According to ancient custom they must veil their faces in the presence of men, but this custom was abandoned long ago.

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In cities and towns where the Chinese Moslems dress exactly like the Han Chinese, the men can be distinguished by their physical build and features, but the women are not easily recognized.

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d. Occupation

Most Chinese Moslems are business men and traders, and most of them also farm. As farmers they are not equal to the Han Chinese, but they excel in dealing with cattle and everywhere they monopolize the beef and sheep trade. They are also merchants, bakers, workers in jade, money changers, and inn and restaurant keepers.

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Outside a Moslem-owned restaurant there hangs a sign displaying a water pot surmounted by a dress hat, and two Chinese characters, Hui-hui. The pot signifies ceremonial cleanliness and guarantees that no pork is used. The hat indicates respect to customers. There are also two Chinese characters on the tea pot, meaning "Pure and True."

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Formerly their religion forebade the Moslems to become money-lenders, barbers, fortune-tellers, actors, or servants or apprentices to the Chinese. How strictly the people now observe this taboo is not known.

3. Social values

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a. Group spirit

The we-feeling is very strong among the Dungans. The whole group will sacrifice time and money for an individual oppressed by outsiders, and fight for him until justice prevails. Endowed with a courageous nature, the Moslem man is willing to sacrifice his life for the welfare of the group.

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This spirit is shown by overt expression in daily social relationships. The Chinese title Lao-piao (old cousin) is applied even to a stranger of the same religious faith. The word old signifies respect; cousin signifies blood relationship. Hence Lao-piao indicates a feeling of closeness toward all members of the faith. Another expression of this feeling is found in the saying that "every Moslem in the world belongs to the same family."

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b. Concept of charity

Many of the values in Chinese Moslem society are based upon

*563 574 576 right side. The honored seat is the one farthest from the door. After the guests are seated the hostess will brew tea, place a wooden box in front of the guests, and serve tsamba and butter. The guests take their eating bowls out of their robes.

[521] At dinner parties, conversation takes place before the meal. It is proper and right for the guests to say farewell and leave immediately after dinner.

c. Position of women

*563 562 796 The position of women in Tibetan society is very low. They have no place in matters of religion, and are permitted to participate in few religious ritual. They are permitted to enter the monastery on the Memorial Day of Sakyamuni, which occurs on the fifteenth day of the fourth month. At sunrise, all women put on their best clothing with all their trimmings and ornaments, and gather outside the monastery. The women of each village form into a group, and the groups take turns going inside the temple and turning the prayer wheel. Men and boys stand by to witness the spectacle. On this day, women fast until sundown.

d. Customs

*563 527 88 [302] [292] [594] [431] On the third day of the first month each year, a coming-of-age festival is held for all girls of fifteen or sixteen. Girls do their hair in the adult style, dress in their best, and visit the households of relatives and friends, who present them with gifts. After a ceremony, the girls may participate in all mixed social functions, and they may also have any sort of relationship with men. After the coming-of-age ceremony, a girl may ask any man she likes to spend the night in her tent.

*563 584 [789] [695] Tibetan marriage follows much the same customs as in traditional China. Proposals are made through go-betweens, who are usually relatives of the families. It is important that the horoscopes of bride and bridegroom be in harmony. When the parents and the young couple give consent, gifts of wine and katags are exchanged and a contract is drawn up giving the terms on which the alliance is to be made.

*563 583 584 The family receiving a bride or a "male bride" (The male bride is a man who marries into the bride's family, leaving his own home and joining hers.) pays the family for the bride in money or jewels, and also pays a sum to meet the expenses of the engagement party. Katags are exchanged between the relatives of the two families to signify mutual consent and wishes for a happy union. The bride usually has a dowry in cash or in livestock, land and goods, depending upon the means of the family.

*563 585 Before the wedding day, the families of the bride and bridegroom prepare a feast to entertain relatives and friends, who bring gifts for the couple. The bride's family builds a tent for the ceremony, decorating it with pillows and comfortable seats

# RELIGION

## I. Historical Background of the Religions of Inner Asia

771 795 Various religions have been strong in the Northwest, among them Shamanism, Buddhism, Nestorianism, Manichaeism, Confucianism, Taoism and Islam. The latter is the predominant religion among the Turks and the Dungans. Buddhism is the religion of the Mongols, Mongours, Shira Yögür and Tibetans. Nestorianism and Manichaeism have become extinct, but Confucianism and Taoism are still alive in Chinese communities (see China Handbook).

### A. Shamanism

771 756 Shamanism is a pagan faith based upon concepts of demons and spirits, with whom the Shaman, or priest, attempts to maintain contact by either sending his soul to them or receiving [787] them into his own soul. The Shaman usually functions in a self- [273] induced trance, produced by taking alcoholic beverages, toad- [276] stool powder, et cetera. A high percentage of Shamans suffer [158] from various neuroses, severe forms of hysteria, or epilepsy, and the selection of a new Shaman may be based upon such manifestations of a deviant personality. Sometimes, however, the [428] position of Shaman is hereditary.

756 The Shaman is regarded as a mediator between man and the supernatural. He exercises his magic powers for such purposes as healing, rain-making, success in hunting, prevention of [787] accidents, and divination. In central Asia, the common methods of divination are by the flight of birds and by scapulimancy, or interpretation of cracks on the shoulderblade of a sheep which [292] has been treated over a fire. While functioning in his supernatural capacity, the Shaman wears a distinctive dress, usually a long robe decorated with metal discs, small bells and the claws of the totem birds.

The training of a Shaman is long and involved, and he usually does not reach full professional status until the age of forty or fifty. Shamanists have no ecclesiastical organization, but rank Shamans on the basis of their success in dealing with the supernatural.

756 77 Besides the various ghosts, ancestral and animal spirits and other lesser supernatural beings, the Shamanists recognize a supreme being, the Tengri, who is the universe personified, God and heaven. He is the fountain of life, as he gives man his 171 soul, and the fate of all peoples depends upon him. The Altaic 776 people believe that the Tengri observes all and everything; no

779 785 c. Fasting (Ṣaum). Fasting, according to Islam, is primarily a spiritual discipline. Satisfying one's thirst and hunger are considered great temptations, and a chance is given to man to overcome his temptation.

[796] Moslems are required to fast for twenty-nine or thirty days of the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the lunar year. Fasting begins at the appearance of the moon of Ramadan and ends on the appearance of the new moon of Shawwal (the tenth month). Fasting is to be observed with complete abstinence from food and drink during the hours of daylight. The fast is broken after sunset and during the hours of the night. The last meal should be taken before sunrise. The Koran and the Hadith make special mention of people who are exempted from fasting. The Koran mentions those who are sick and those on a journey. This is not an absolute exemption, as the sick man and the traveler are required to fast later, when the sickness has gone or the journey has ended. Hadith also gives extension or exemption to certain classes of people who, because of some physical disability or the performance of heavy labor, are not able to fast. In addition, fasting is included among the expiations for various offenses.

779 788 d. Pilgrimage (Hajj). As an institution the hajj existed from a very remote antiquity, before the advent of Islam. The sacredness of Mecca was established in the Koran by Muhammad and given strong connection with the names of Abraham and Ishmael.

[175] In the first and second years of the Hejira (Muhammad's exodus from Mecca to Medina, 622-23 A.D.) full directions relating to the hajj were given by the Prophet. The traditional days in Dhu'l Hijja (the twelfth month) and the traditional ceremonies: going in circuit round the Kaaba; running between the two small eminences of Safa and Marwa in the vicinity; assembling on the ninth day of the month at the hill of Ararat; offering sacrifices of sheep and camels at Mina on the way back to Mecca—all were retained and prescribed in the Koran. Other traditional usages, including the kissing of the Black Stone set in the walls of the Kaaba, and the stoning of the pillars representing the Devil in the vicinty of Mina, though not mentioned explicitly, were observed by Muhammad in his pilgrimages and so were incorporated into the Moslem rite.

[783] [302] [292] As before prayer the worshipper must be ritually clean, so also before making the pilgrimage the worshipper must be in a state of ritual consecration (ihram). This involves shaving the head and discarding ordinary clothing before entering the territory of Mecca, putting on instead two plain sheets and leaving the face and the head uncovered.

Although the pilgrimage constitutes a religious obligation for every Moslem, the obligation is explicitly limited by possession

3:Cable & French M-5 (1926) 1927
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that two hundred thousand people had perished in the disaster.

Before reaching Lanchow we crossed a wide river by means of a well-built and handsome bridge, which had also been constructed with famine relief funds, and which now provided the means for saving scores of lives, a heavy yearly toll having hitherto been exacted by the treacherous mountain torrent.

On leaving the town of Tsingningchow we travelled for seven days before touching another Mission station —a tremendous gap in the chain, so it seemed to us in those days, unused as we were then to the wider horizons of the Great North-West. Half-way stood the little market-town of Anting, to which Mission authorities had directed our attention as the possible goal of our quest; but as we walked through its streets with every perception alert, we felt the firm conviction that our appointed destination lay still farther ahead.

One of our litter-men was a Moslem—proud and cantankerous, as all of his kind. A somewhat grimy, white, woollen cap was the badge of his belief, and at brief intervals he would raise his head and sing a wild snatch of the 'Song of the Wandering Dove,' a weird melody greatly loved by the men of his race, and sung by them in eulogy of home when on a journey, the barbaric intervals of which produced a most dramatic effect in those lonely gullies. An altercation frequently arose between this man and the others, on the subject of the choice between Moslem or Gentile inns, the former being distinguished by the painted sign of a teapot, and the mystic words: 'KIAO MEN' (member of the assembly). The boasted 'cleanliness' of the Moslem inn is, however, not visible to the naked eye, but manifests itself otherwise, namely, in endless bickerings with the travellers on matters of purification connected